Rooks Heath College

Mental Health Policy

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Introduction

This policy replaces any previous policy and follows the DfE regulations and those issued by the London Borough of Harrow. All members of staff are affected by and expected to adhere to this policy.

In line with the college's Equal Opportunities and Special Educational Needs policies, we aim to give all students equal opportunities to take part in all aspects of college life, as far as is appropriate, practicable and compatible with giving regard to health and safety and the efficient education of other students.

This policy takes account of the Government's aim for children to have the support they need under Every Child Matters:

- to be healthy
- to stay safe
- to enjoy and achieve
- to make a positive contribution
- to achieve economic well-being

The policy will follow the five principles of the Children's Plan:

- to support parents and families
- to allow children to reach their full potential
- to enable children to enjoy their childhood whilst preparing for adult life
- to provide services in response to children and family needs
- to use preventative measures to help students avoid the possibility of failure

This policy is founded in the College's commitment to the development and maintenance of good behaviour and a positive and inclusive ethos for all members of the College community. It reflects the College's commitment to encourage and reflect diversity in all aspects of college life.

Foreword

Rooks Heath College is a mixed 11 to 18 multicultural comprehensive in the London Borough of Harrow. This policy is formulated by the Designated Lead Person for Safeguarding in conjunction with other members of the College's Leadership and Management Group. The policy is subject to review every 3 years by the College's Leadership and Management Group and is subject to approval by the Governors of the College.

Policy Statement

> *Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. (World Health Organization)*

The College aims to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole College community; students, staff, parents and carers, and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our lives in just the same way as physical health. We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. All children go through ups and downs through their college career/life and some face significant life events. In an average classroom, three children will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for students affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Rooks Heath Medical Needs and Intimate Care policy in cases where a student's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND report/Learning Development policy where a student has an identified special educational need.

The Policy Aims to:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and students

- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues

- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health

- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues

- Provide support to students suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents or carers

- Provide a service where students feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma

Lead Members of Staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Sue Rockell - Designated Child Protection Lead

- Lorraine Dale, Louise Woutersz & Lara Geoghegan - Mental Health Support

- Pushpa Khimji & Katie Clark - Welfare Assistants

- Ros Corzberg - Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral)

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- Bobby Crawford - CPD lead
- Jo Austin - Head of PSHE

Supporting and Training Staff

Supporting and promoting the mental health and wellbeing of staff is an essential component of a healthy school and we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance and wellbeing, such as by running wellbeing days. Staff also have access to the EAP Employee Assistance Program.

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that pupils with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need.

All staff will understand about possible risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience problems; such a physical long-term illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss, including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying.

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should speak to the Safeguarding Team in the first instance. If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the designated child protection team, the Headteacher, the Associate Headteacher or the designated governor. If the student presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

As a minimum, all staff will receive annual training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training to enable them to keep students safe.

We will inform staff of relevant e-learning courses for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. The [MindEd learning portal](#) provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in depth knowledge will be considered as part of our performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due developing situations with one or more students.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will run twilight training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

Suggestions for individual, group or whole College CPD should be discussed with Bobby Crawford CPD Lead, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

A whole College approach to promoting positive mental health

We take a whole College approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help students become more resilient, be happy and successful and prevent problems before they arise.

This encompasses 7 aspects:

1. Creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience that everyone understands, such as mindfulness
2. Helping students to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need to
3. Helping students to be resilient learners

4. Teaching students social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health

5. Early identification of students who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services

6. Effectively working with parents and carers

7. Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and resilience

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues and aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of mental health issues.

Individual Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for students causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the students, the parents and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a student's condition

- Special requirements and precautions

- Medication and any side effects

- What to do and who to contact in an emergency

- The role the College can play

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling students to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

We will follow the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

Supporting students' positive mental health

We believe we have a key role in promoting students positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems. Our College has developed a range of strategies and approaches including;

Student-led activities

- Campaigns and assemblies to raise awareness of mental health run by our Youth Health Champions

- Youth Health Champions support

Transition programmes

- A transition programme to secondary education, which includes identified Year 6 students having a staff mentor to support a smooth transition to Rooks Heath.

- A transition programme for identified students from Key Stage 3 to 4.

- A transition programme for identified students from Key Stage 4 and beyond.

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Class activities

- Mindfulness sessions for students
- Mental health teaching programmes e.g. based on cognitive behavioural therapy.

Whole College

- Make a Noise: a reporting platform for students and parents to discreetly and confidentially report incidents or concerns.
- Our form tutors are key to supporting the wellbeing of students, particularly in Year 7, and they stay with the same tutor group all the way through the College providing consistent support to them.
- Displays and information around the College about positive mental health and where to go for help and support both within the College and outside the College.

Small group activities

- Social groups
- Mentoring

We will ensure that staff, students and parents are aware of sources of support within College and in the local community. The support that is available within our College and local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it is outlined in Appendix C.

Signposting

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as common rooms and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support to students within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of student help-seeking by ensuring students understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Why to access it
- What is likely to happen next

Warning Signs

College staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns to the Children Safeguarding team.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits

- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretively
- Lateness to or absence from College
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Managing disclosures

A student may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure.

If a student chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

Staff should listen rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the student's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be recorded in writing and sent to the Children Safeguarding e-mail address. This written record should include:

- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information should be shared with the team who will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps.

Confidentiality

We will be honest with regard to the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a student on, then we should discuss with the student:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the Children Safeguarding team. This helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the student, it ensures continuity of care in our absence; and it provides an extra source of ideas and

support. We will explain this to the student and discuss with them who would be the most appropriate and helpful person to share this information with.

Parents should be informed if it is deemed appropriate to inform them. We will always give students the option of us informing parents for them or with them.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the Children Safeguarding team must be informed immediately.

Working with Parents

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.

- Who should be present? Consider parents, the student, and other members of staff.

- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We are accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect.

We will highlight further sources of information and give them information to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you're sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too, e.g. parent helplines and forums.

Working with All Parents

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the College about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our College website.

- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to go about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child

- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents

- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings.

Supporting Peers

When a student is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations with the student who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

- What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told

- How friends can best support

- Things friends should avoid doing or saying which may inadvertently cause upset

- Warning signs that their friend may need help (e.g. signs of relapse).

Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:

- Where and how to access support for themselves
- Safe sources of further information about their friend's condition
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling.

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Appendix A: Further information and sources of support about common mental health issues

Below, we have sign-posted information and guidance about the issues most commonly seen in school-aged children. The links will take you through to the most relevant page of the listed website. Some pages are aimed primarily at parents but they are listed here because we think they are useful for school staff too.

Support on all these issues can be accessed via Young Minds (www.youngminds.org.uk), Mind (www.mind.org.uk) and (for e-learning opportunities) Minded (www.minded.org.uk).

Self-harm
Self-harm describes any behaviour where a young person causes harm to themselves in order to cope with thoughts, feelings or experiences they are not able to manage in any other way. It most frequently takes the form of cutting, burning or non-lethal overdoses in adolescents, while younger children and young people with special needs are more likely to pick or scratch at wounds, pull out their hair or bang or bruise themselves.

Online support
SelfHarm.co.uk: www.selfharm.co.uk

National Self-Harm Network: www.nshn.co.uk

Depression
Ups and downs are a normal part of life for all of us, but for someone who is suffering from depression these ups and downs may be more extreme. Feelings of failure, hopelessness, numbness or sadness may invade their day-to-day life over an extended period of weeks or months, and have a significant impact on their behaviour and ability and motivation to engage in day-to-day activities.

Online support
Relate www.relate.org.uk/relationship-help/help-children-and-young-people

Young Minds https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/conditions/depression/

Anxiety, panic attacks and phobias
Anxiety can take many forms in children and young people, and it is something that each of us experiences at low levels as part of normal life. When thoughts of anxiety, fear or panic are repeatedly present over several weeks or months and/or they are beginning to impact on a young person's ability to access or enjoy day-to-day life, intervention is needed.

Online support
Anxiety UK: www.anxietyuk.org.uk

Obsessions and compulsions

Obsessions describe intrusive thoughts or feelings that enter our minds which are disturbing or upsetting; compulsions are the behaviours we carry out in order to manage those thoughts or feelings. For example, a young person may be constantly worried that their house will burn down if they don't turn off all switches before leaving the house. They may respond to these thoughts by repeatedly checking switches, perhaps returning home several times to do so. Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) can take many forms – it is not just about cleaning and checking.

Online support
OCD UK: www.ocduk.org/ocd

Suicidal feelings

Young people may experience complicated thoughts and feelings about wanting to end their own lives. Some young people never act on these feelings though they may openly discuss and explore them, while other young people die suddenly from suicide apparently out of the blue.

Online support
Prevention of young suicide UK – PAPYRUS: www.papyrus-uk.org

On the edge: ChildLine spotlight report on suicide: www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/research-and-resources/on-the-edge-childline-spotlight/

Eating problems

Food, weight and shape may be used as a way of coping with, or communicating about, difficult thoughts, feelings and behaviours that a young person experiences day to day. Some young people develop eating disorders such as anorexia (where food intake is restricted), binge eating disorder and bulimia nervosa (a cycle of bingeing and purging). Other young people, particularly those of primary or preschool age, may develop problematic behaviours around food including refusing to eat in certain situations or with certain people. This can be a way of communicating messages the child does not have the words to convey.

Online support
Beat – the eating disorders charity: www.b-eat.co.uk/about-eating-disorders

Eating Difficulties in Younger Children and when to worry: www.inourhands.com/eating-difficulties-in-younger-children

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Appendix B: Guidance and advice documents

Mental health and behaviour in schools - departmental advice for school staff.
Department for Education (2016)

Counselling in schools: a blueprint for the future - departmental advice for school
staff and counsellors. Department for Education (2015)

Teacher Guidance: Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing
(2015). PSHE Association. Funded by the Department for Education (2015)

Keeping children safe in education - statutory guidance for schools and colleges.
Department for Education (2016)

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions - statutory guidance for
governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies in England.
Department for Education (2014)

Healthy child programme from 5 to 19 years old is a recommended framework of
universal and progressive services for children and young people to promote optimal
health and wellbeing. Department of Health (2009

Future in mind – promoting, protecting and improving our children and young
people's mental health and wellbeing - a report produced by the Children and Young
People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Taskforce to examine how to improve mental
health services for children and young people. Department of Health (2015)

NICE guidance on social and emotional wellbeing in secondary education

Rooks Heath Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Rooks Heath Medical Needs and Intimate Care Policy

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Appendix C: Sources or support at school and in the local community

School Based Support - Who to go?

Students are encouraged to speak to any member of staff that they feel comfortable with. This could include, support staff, form tutors or teaching staff. If needed then this is passed on to the relevant DoL/Pastoral Leader or Safeguarding Team.

Directors of Learning and Pastoral Leaders;

Year 7 – Mr P Todd & Ms E Jenkins. AG15/D5
Year 8 – Mrs V Waters & Mr C Ring. AG15/D5
Year 9 – Mr D Williams & Ms J Archarya. AG15/D5
Year 10 – Mr S Sharp & Ms S Rockell. AG15/D5
Year 11 – Ms H Grover & Ms J Chambers. AG15/D5
Year 12 & 13 Mr A Wright, Mrs J Todd & Ms S Malins. BG8

Pastoral Deputy Head - Mrs Corzberg AG15
Safeguarding team - Ms S Rockell, Miss L Dale & Ms Geoghegan BF5/BF8
Time2Talk – Ms Geoghegan
Inclusion Base - BF5

Information posters to direct students on where to go for support, are in all classrooms/noticeboards.

The Safeguarding Team to deliver assemblies at the beginning of the year about where to go for support.

Outside organisations

Make a Noise
Young Carers
Compass
Bereavement Care
Harrow Horizons.